

Message Text

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AMCONSUL SAO PAULO
AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 172823

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, BR

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR WELLS' MEETING WITH BRAZILIAN POLITICAL
FIGURES

REF: GENEVA 05887, STATE 165726, USUN 02217, USUN 2249

1. FOLLOWING PARAGRAPHS PROVIDE BIOGRAPHIC DATE ON TWO OF
BRAZILIAN EX-CONGRESSMAN MACIEL'S GROUP WHICH RECENTLY
REQUESTED MEETING WITH AMBASSADORS YOUNG AND WELLS. THE
DEPARTMENT WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL BIO DATA ON OTHER
MEMBERS OF THE GROUP AS THEIR NAMES ARE MADE KNOWN TO US.
DATE OF INFORMATION IS JULY 1977.

2. LYANEAS DIAS MACIEL, BORN 23 DECEMBER 1926 IN MINAS
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GERAIS STATE, BRAZIL.

CURRENT OCCUPATION: CHIEF OF HUMAN RIGHTS DIVISION FOR
LATIN AMERICAN, WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES.

A NOTED PRESBYTERIAN LAYMAN, FORMER FEDERAL DEPUTY AND
OPPOSITION LEADER, LYSANEAS MACIEL HAS WORKED FOR THE

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN GENEVA, SINCE LATE 1976. BECAUSE OF HIS CURRENT POSITION AND PERSONAL PRESTIGE, THE MILITARY-DOMINATED GOVERNMENT OF BRAZIL VIEWS HIM AS A

POTENTIAL THORN IN ITS SIDE AND BRAZILIAN SECURITY FORCES HAVE CONTINUED TO MONITOR HIS ACTIVITIES AND TRAVELS.

MACIEL, FOR HIS PART, HAS ATTEMPTED TO GENERATE SUPPORT FOR THE OPPOSITION FORCES IN BRAZIL. IN EARLY 1977 HE VISITED THE UNITED STATES TO CONTACT MEMBERS OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN HIS COUNTRY. MACIEL BELIEVES THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS -- LIKE HIS OWN -- IS BASED UPON CHRISTIAN VALUES.

MACIEL SERVED IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF RIO DE JANEIRO STATE, FROM 1967 TO 1976. DURING THAT TIME HE WAS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE SPOKESMAN OF THE OPPOSITION BRAZILIAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MDB). HE FEARLESSLY ATTACKED THE GOVERNMENT ON A WIDE RANGE OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES, BUT HE WAS ESPECIALLY IMPASSIONED ON THE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. MACIEL MUTED HIS CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT ERNESTO GEISEL WHEN THE GEISEL ADMINISTRATION INITIALLY SHOWN SIGNS OF LIBERALIZING THE POLITICAL SYSTEM. HE SOON BECAME DISILLUSIONED, CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, AND IN RESPONSE TO HIS RENEWED ATTACKS HE BECAME A TARGET OF HARRASSMENT BY THE SECURITY FORCES. IN APRIL 1976 MACIEL THREW DOWN THE GAUNTLET AND DENOUNCED THE GOVERNMENT IN A SPEECH IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES. GEISEL RESPONDED QUICKLY AND REMOVED MACIEL'S POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR TEN YEARS. FEARING FOR THE LIVES OF HIS FAMILY AND HIMSELF, MACIEL WENT INTO EXILE A FEW MONTHS LATER IN SWITZERLAND.

MACIEL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE U.S. HAS BEEN AMBIGUOUS. HE WAS CONVERTED TO THE PROTESTANT FAITH BY A US MISSIONARY AND STUDIED AT ST. JOHNS COLLEGE IN ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND. MACIEL GETS ALONG WELL WITH US OFFICIALS AND HIS LAW FIRM REPRESENTED U.S. COMPANIES IN BRAZIL. AT THE SAME TIME HE HAS CRITICIZED THIS COUNTRY FOR BUTTRESSING MILITARY GOVERNMENTS AND DEFENDING THE INTERESTS OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS. MACIEL SUPPORTED BRAZIL'S EFFORTS TO OBTAIN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES AND ALLEGED THAT THE UNITED STATES OPPOSED HIS NATION'S NUCLEAR TREATY WITH WEST GERMANY BECAUSE OF THE POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL LOSSES TO US BUSINESSES.

MACIEL WAS A MEMBER OF THE "AUTENTICO" (LEFTWING) FACTION OF THE MDB. THE MILITARY VIEWED HIM - AS IT DOES MOST

LEFTISTS - AS AN ALLY OF THE BRAZILIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCB). IN MACIEL'S CASE, HOWEVER, THERE IS STRONG EVIDENCE THAT THE PCB ATTEMPTED TO SABOTAGE HIS CANDIDACY IN THE 1974 CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS BECAUSE HE WAS A LEFT-OF-CENTER ALTERNATIVE TO COMMUNISM.

3. AIRTON ESTEVENS SOARES, BORN 1 SEPTEMBER 1945 IN PIRAJUI, SAO PAULO STATE, BRAZIL.

CURRENT OCCUPATION: FEDERAL DEPUTY.
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A DYNAMIC YOUNG FEDERAL DEPUTY SINCE MARCH 1975 AND ATTORNEY FROM SAO PAULO STATE, AIRTON SOARES IS A LEADING MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITION BRAZILIAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT (MDB). HE HAS DEFENDED LEFTIST POLITICAL PRISONERS BEFORE MILITARY COURTS AND SHARPLY CRITICIZED GOVERNMENT POLICIES. THOUGH STILL A DEPUTY HE COULD BE "CASSATED" (LOSE HIS POLITICAL RIGHTS FOR 10 YEARS) IN THE NEAR FUTURE BECAUSE OF HIS POLITICAL VIEWS.

SOARES IS A MEMBER OF THE "AUTENTICO" (LEFTWING) OF THE MDB WHICH MAKES HIM SUSPECT IN THE EYES OF THE MILITARY HIERARCHY. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, THAT HE IS AN EXTREMIST OR A COMMUNIST. IN FACT, SOARES HAS ENCOURAGED THE MDB TO ATTRACT MILITARY PERSONNEL TO ITS RANKS.

SOARES, WHO SPEAKS ENGLISH, IS ON GOOD TERMS WITH U.S. OFFICIALS IN BRAZIL. HE STRONGLY SUPPORTS PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER'S EFFORTS IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS. SOARES HAS ATTEMPTED TO ESTABLISH A NETWORK OF HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTERS IN BRAZIL TO REPORT ON VIOLATIONS AND PASS THE INFORMATION ON TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL. THE DEPUTY HAS CRITICIZED THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO ALTER BRAZIL'S NUCLEAR ENERGY TREATY WITH WEST GERMANY BECAUSE, IN HIS OPINION, SUCH EFFORTS HAVE GENERATED NATIONALISTIC SUPPORT FOR PRESIDENT ERNESTO GEISEL AND CAUSED SOME PEOPLE TO OVERLOOK BRAZIL'S HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM. VANCE

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